

BACKGROUNDER 1-0656
EDIE APPLE/BRUSSELS

APRIL 27, 1976

NATO AND CHALLENGES TO MODERN SOCIETY

ANNCR:

EXPERTS FROM THE FIFTEEN COUNTRIES IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ARE MEETING IN BRUSSELS THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS NOT TANKS AND PLANES, BUT SUCH ISSUES AS HOW TO CLEAN UP RIVERS, OCEANS AND THE AIR ABOVE CITIES, AND HOW TO FIND NEW SOURCES OF ENERGY. EDIE APPLE SENDS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM BRUSSELS.

VOICE:

THE EXPERTS ARE COMING TO BRUSSELS FOR A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY -- AS ITS CALLED IN NATO JARGON -- C-C-M-S.

SEVEN YEARS AGO, THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE DECIDED IT COULD USE SOME OF THE EXPERIENCE GAINED THROUGH YEARS OF CONSULTATION ON MILITARY AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS TO WORK ON THE PROBLEMS MODERN MAN FACES IN HIS PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. THE MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION REASONED THAT IF THEY COULD WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD ROADS, PIPELINES, AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS NEEDED FOR A MILITARY ALLIANCE, THEY COULD ALSO EXCHANGE TECHNOLOGICAL KNOW HOW AND EXPERIENCE ON THESE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY WORKS THROUGH WHAT ARE CALLED "PILOT PROJECTS." EACH PROJECT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE COUNTRY -- USUALLY THE COUNTRY THAT PROPOSED IT. OTHER MEMBERS JOIN IN THE TO THE EXTENT THEY ARE QUALIFIED AND INTERESTED. ONE EARLY PILOT PROJECT ON AIR POLLUTION WAS LED BY THE UNITED STATES, BUT TURKEY AND WEST GERMANY BOTH HELPED OUT WITH A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE

AIR QUALITY OVER THE CITIES OF SAINT LOUIS, FRANKFURT AND ANKARA.

ANOTHER EARLY PROJECT, LED BY BELGIUM, INVESTIGATED OIL SPILLS. AS A RESULT OF THIS STUDY, MEMBERS OF NATO HAVE AGREED TO END ANY INTENTIONAL DISCHARGE OF OIL FROM THEIR TANKERS AND SHIPS BY THE END OF THIS DECADE. FRANCE IS NOW PROPOSING A NEW, BUT RELATED PILOT PROJECT. THIS WILL INVOLVE USING SOPHISTICATED ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO DETECT OIL SPILLS AND THEIR SOURCES. OTHER PILOT PROJECTS INVOLVE DISPOSING OF WASTES, DISASTER RELIEF, ROAD SAFETY AND HEALTH CARE. AND IN THE PAST TWO YEARS SEVERAL HAVE BEEN STARTED ON ALTERNATE SOURCES OF ENERGY.

SINCE NATO HAS NO SUPRANATIONAL POWERS, IT CANNOT TELL ITS MEMBERS WHAT TO DO -- THE COMMITTEE AIMS AT INSPIRING ACTION BY EITHER INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS -- SUCH AS UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES. IT TRIES TO PULL TOGETHER EXISTING KNOWLEDGE ON A SUBJECT AND TO SET UP OF THE COMMITTEE IS AVAILABLE TO ANYONE INTERESTED. IN SOME CASES NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE JOINED IN THE WORK ON SPECIFIC PROJECTS.

THIS WEEK'S MEETING IS ONE OF TWO HELD EACH YEAR BY THE FULL COMMITTEE ON CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY TO REVIEW THE PROJECTS UNDERWAY AND TO CONSIDER NEW IDEAS. IN ADDITION TO THE FRENCH PROJECT ON DETECTING OIL SPILLS, THIS SESSION IS CONSIDERING AN AMERICAN PROPOSAL TO STUDY WAYS TO USE HIGH SULFER COAL WITHOUT HARMING THE ENVIRONMENT.

THE EXPERTS ARE ALSO HOLDING A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON HOW TO DECIDE WHEN POLLUTION IS A HAZARD.... AND HOW TO SET STANDARDS TO PREVENT THIS. -0-
GH/CAK